

critical digest

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F. M. BRAUNS

Sept 1, 1954 Vol VI No 51 \$10 year The Weekly New York City Theatre Newsletter

The Fifth Season- re-opens Sept 5 matinee at Cort...Hayride-48th St 9/13/54 Jack Stone and Barron Howard present "hillbilly musical" based on Richmond, Va. radio program...The Pony Cart- De Lys 9/14/54. I B Joselow presents Roger Garis new play with Louisa Horton...Dear Charles- Morosco 9/15/54. Tallulah Bankhead stars...A Midsummer Night's Dream-Met Opera 9/21/54. Old Vic limited run production with Miora Shearer...Home is the Hero-Booth 9/22/54. Theatre Guild. W. Miner present Walter Macken's Play...All Summer Long- Coronet 9/23/54. Robert Anderson's new play with John Kerr, June Walker.

Strawhat Tryouts

Champagne Complex., Leslie Stevens new play which debuted at Bucks County, Pa. Playhouse, needs rewriting and the proper casting in the 3 character comedy to make it a good Broadway bet, rates Hony, Variety...My Aunt Daisy, a new play by Albert Halper and Joseph Schrank presented at Westport, Conn, Country Playhouse, was rated better than average by Morehouse, World Telegram & Sun, and Dash; Women's Wear. Both lauded Jo Van Fleet in title role. Former found some lively and well written scenes, plus several good performances. Latter called play a fine grained and absorbing characterization of a spinster who refuses to compromise in her romantic ideals...Brother Cain, a new drama by Jerome Chodgrove which was tried out at Spring Lake, NJ, Tower Playhouse, is insufficiently compelling to rate good commercial prospects, pans Geor, Variety...The Thirteen Clocks and Trouble in Tahiti twin musical bill presented at Westchester, NY, Playhouse, is superlative summer fare, raves Dash, Women's Wear. He also predicted that the two short pieces would make capital fare for the off-beat, Off Broadway fan. Though he doubted if it would be wise to bring show to Broadway.

Off Broadway Calendar

The Pony Cart- De Lys 9/14/54. I B Joselow production of Roger Garis play with Louisa Horton...The Way of the World-Cherry Lane 9/29/54. Proscenium Productions presents a revival of Congreve's play as first of three classics...The Clandestine Marriage- Provincetown 10/2. Players Theatre present David Garrick's play of 1766 as their second production. Many of cast of The Cretan Woman will be in show...Sing Me No Lullaby-Phoenix 10/5/54. Second season of productions by Norris Houghton and T. Edward Hambleton opens with production of Robert Ardley's play...The Moon for Misbegotton- Bijou 10/15/54. Ensemble Repertory's opening bill. New plays will be added regularly...Sands of Negev-President 1-19/54. Benjamin Rothman presents Israeli play in English.

Stubborn Broadway Successes

The shows which survived on Broadway this summer disprove the prevalent opinion that the critical notices determine a show's immediate fate, points out "Stage" Broadway reporter Mawby Green. The British reporter explains the success of Kismet and Can-Can, which didn't win reviewer raves, by the fact that both approach spectacles in their mounting, both have exciting dancing, hummable music, and people worth talking about. Thus audiences find it simple to wait through the telling of their slightly sophomoric books which at times seem interminable.

CD PLAYGOERS GUIDE CHART RESUMES NEXT WEEK- Sept 8 issue

 ' Off Broadway '

Originals Only is presenting a Sat. midnight performance weekly of If This Be My Passion, a comedy melodrama with an all negro cast. Cast includes Eugene Boyd, Ernestine Johnson and Estelle Lee. James Roach directed.

Congreve's The Way of the World will be revived Sept 29 by Proscenium Productions at the Cherry Lane Theatre as the first of three productions of the company this season...David Garrick's 1760 play The Clandestine Marriage will be presented by Players Theatre at Provincetown Theatre Oct 2 after closing of The Cretan Woman...Blackfriars Guild will present Slightly Delinquent, a new comedy by Leo Thomas in Oct...Major Barbara continues at Greenwich Mews through Sept 26...Theatre 12 production of Sartre's The Flies which was presented Aug 29-30 at Cherry Lane will re-open at another off Broadway theatre soon.

Two critics okayed The Early Primrose production at Royal Playhouse on East 4th. Herridge, Post, thought both the play and the production of David Haas' first play were commendable and amateurish. But on the whole she found the play written and acted with a serious sensitivity that gave life to some of the scenes. Kerner, Women's Wear, rated show as the best of the many Off Broadway plays on homosexuality. Play treats its theme with an artful combination of sensitive and sympathetic observation, electric suspense and almost unbearable frankness.

 ' West Coast '

You Touched Me is playing for two weekends at Ebsen Playhouse, Pacific Palisades...All Negro production of The Moon Is Blue is being presented at Ebony Showcase...Shame the Devil, farce melodrama of Hollywood in the late 1920's, debuted at Beverly Hills Playhouse.

Ten O Clock Call, a new comedy by Finlay McDermid which debuted at Laguna Summer Theatre, needs much work, trade paper critics agreed.

 ' Vaudeville '

New Palace show features Mr. Ballantine, Ceil Cabot, Michael Chimes, and Vince and Gloria Haydock. Film is "Dawn at Socorro."

 ' Theatre Book Comments '

"Shakespeare: The Complete Works" edited by G B Harrison (Harcourt, Brace) was highly commended by Atkinson, Times as an excellent one volume Shakespeare which brings the Bard wholly alive as a person who had a brilliant and prosperous career in the commercial theatre.

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TUNE WNYC Allen Jay "Around NYC" Thur at 8 AM for "Off Broadway Round Up" prepared by CD.

TUNE WNBC Ben Grauer "Morning News" 7 30 AM day after opening of new shows for "CD" quotes of reviews.

DAMON UNION MEMORIAL FUND THEATRE TICKETS re available at Hotel Astor, 4th and Broadway office or by phone at 7-184. Front row center seats available at box office prices to "highest contributor." Checks for tickets and contributions will be returned on unfilled orders.

' Green Room Department '

CRITICS ON CRITICS...Drama critics at a first night are the most determined collection of incurable romantics currently at large, Watts, Post, is convinced. Any group of nominally mature men who will spend the best years of their lives sitting evening after evening in the presence of the run of the mill Broadway offerings in the wistful hope that eventually a masterpiece will come along are living proof that romanticism can survive even into the hydrogen bomb age...Frankly, Chapman, News, does not care what his colleagues eat, when, where, or what. He still believes the majority of seat paying first nighters would rather have an 8 30 curtain than scramble to an 8 PM debut.

COLUMN TIP...Edna Wallace Hopper sees Kismet monthly, learns O Connor...Kilgallen wonders if Hayride will sell Mothersill's in the lobby....Will Mary Martin sing "I'm gonna wash that fantasy right out of my hair" in Peter Pan, asks Phillips.

NEW THEATRE CHANCES...New York will not be getting any new theatres for at least two or three years, Louis Lotito, City Investing Company, informed Chapman, News. His firm has done research, and has its eye on various locations for new theatres. They have concluded that the best theatre to build would be a musical house seating 2000 and as intimate as it could be made.

ACTING & AUDIENCE...The theatre's only truth lies in the thoughts and emotions of its audiences, reminds Burr, Playbill. To create a precise and overwhelming effect upon the audience is the only possible aim of any honest theatre worker...The audience standards of acting is different from the playwright and the student standard of acting, Arthur Richman, explained to Wharton, Saturday Review. The audience wants the performance to have an emotional impact on them! Wharton added advice that playgoer should remember that what a given critic panned, may provide the emotional thrill of his life.

ATKINSON LETTER...NY Times drama critic Brooks Atkinson letter to the editor on the current American scene stated that in many respects, both the administrative and legislative branches of the Government show a compulsion toward totalitarian attitudes and practices. Critic asks if Americans really want it this way?

BARRY SULLIVAN INTERVIEWS...The Caine Mutiny Court Martial is sexy Barry Sullivan told Herridge, Post, because women can't resist men in trouble. Actor, who has replaced Henry Fonda in hit show considers seeing the theatre folk at Sardi's after his first Wed. matinee one of the major thrills of his returning to NY. Actor intends to stay in theatre for awhile, forsaking films.

' Pros & Cons by TMK '

Producers continually blame critics for the failure of a given opus, when they have no one to blame but themselves. It certainly by no stretch of the invective can be the critic's fault that the playwright penned a second rate script, that the director miscast, or any of the dozens of other faults an alert critic can find in a poor show. Instead of keeping the public away by reporting such items, the

critic is actually performing a service to the producer pointing out how his investment can be saved by upgrading what might have turned out as second rate entertainment into a first rate product. Taken from this viewpoint, how could producers survive WITHOUT critics?

A "winter subway circuit" has been set up by Charles Harrow using the Parkway Theatre, Brooklyn, and the Jamaica Theatre, Queens. Dial M For Murder with Donald Woods and Katharine Sergava opens Sept 7 at the Parkway and will move the following week to the Jamaica. The second show will be Victor Jory in My Three Angels opening Sept 14 at the Parkway.

Plays

Plays which entered rehearsal this week include Reclining Figure, The Boy Friend, and Tender Trap...The Flowering Peach moved opening date from Oct 25 to mid November as Clifford Odets cuts his five hour script...That's Life, west coast revue, may play at Palace...Peter Pan will open at Winter Garden Oct 20...Libby Holman will bring her one woman show Blues, Ballads and Sin-Songs to Bijou for limited 6 performance run Oct 4.

People

Burgess Meredith and Scott McKay will replace David Wayne and John Forsythe in Teahouse of the August Moon for 10 weeks starting Sept 20...Josephine Hull is again out of Solid Gold Cadillac having fractured two ribs...Joan Holloway replaces Gwen Verdon, Can Can, Sept 8, latter leaving to make film...Marie Powers has replaced Jennie Goldstein in Fanny...Jennifer Jones will star in Portrait of a Lady, which Jose Quintero will direct.

Other Broadways

American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy has obtained a building permit to construct a copy of the Stratford, England, Globe Theatre, on its site at Shore Road, Stratford, Conn...Katharine Cornell will open Christopher Fry's The Dark Is Light Enough at the Erlanger Theatre, Buffalo, Nov 24...Bennett and Pleasant have become managers of McCarten Theatre, Princeton, N.J. Several Broadway shows plan pre-Broadway tryouts there.

Theatre Book Notes

"The Collected Plays of Terence Rattigan" has been published by British Book Center, NYC and includes an introduction by the author..."Marked Corners" a play about Abraham Lincoln in Indiana in 1816-1830 by Francesca F Miller has been published by Americana House, Chicago..."Best British One Act Plays of 1952-53" edited by Hugh Miller has been published by Harrup, London.

Theatre TV Notes

Uncle Tom's Cabin, minus usual burlesque, will be presented on CBS TV Omnibus..."Angels Auditions" program will film 89 half hour programs in a "3 D" method, and will sell special glasses at 50¢. Films can be seen in 2 D without the glasses.

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